

# Senior Support Services

## Annual Report -- Year 2017

### Brief History of Organization

Senior Support Services (SSS) was established in 1976 when six churches in downtown Denver came together to assist low-income and homeless seniors who were being displaced by downtown redevelopment. As the need grew, our services expanded. In 1979, we began to provide day shelter, coffee, one hot meal per day and case management services to assist seniors in obtaining government benefits and finding affordable housing. In 1995, SSS bought a building at 18th Avenue & Emerson Street where the full range of services – one-stop shopping – are provided for hungry and homeless seniors.

### Mission

Our mission is to make each day better and safer for Denver's low-income and homeless seniors by providing the resources and support they need to lead more self-sufficient and fulfilling lives.

### Programs

Our overall goal each year is to meet the full range of needs of 2,400 hungry and homeless seniors.

We successfully operate the only day center catering to the needs of the hungry and homeless seniors of the Denver area. Clients get meals, emergency food and clothing, individualized case management, medical care, housing, government benefits, socialization, and activities. We provide:

- Safe daytime shelter -- Open 12 hours each weekday and 5 hours on Sundays
- Three meals served each weekday for up to 300 seniors
- Emergency food and clothing banks
- Access to medical care, health screenings, counseling and health insurance
- Transportation or escort to government offices, work, medical care, etc
- Access to computers and Internet for word processing, email, etc.
- Individualized case management and advocacy including:
  - Obtaining government benefits
  - Obtaining and retaining affordable housing
  - Paying rent and utilities on behalf of clients
  - Mediating tenant-landlord disputes
  - Preventing homelessness through financial management counseling
  - Connecting clients to healthcare providers and health-related services
  - Leading Care Coordination in complex client situations.

# 2017 Accomplishments

## Overall

Provided services for 2,400 hungry and homeless seniors<sup>1</sup>

## Nutrition

Served 71,500 individual meals<sup>2</sup>

Distributed 21,000 emergency food items<sup>3</sup>

## Other Basic Needs

Distributed 8,200 clothing items<sup>4</sup>, 2000 new pr. of socks, 860 new pr. of boxer briefs<sup>5</sup>

Distributed 11,500 hygiene items

Made direct payments for birth certificates, prescriptions, healthcare-related items, moves, background checks, etc, for 246 seniors

## Housing

Obtained or retained shelter or housing on 5,105 occasions<sup>6</sup>

Made direct housing payments on behalf of 152 seniors<sup>7</sup>

Made direct utility payments on behalf of 109 seniors<sup>8</sup>

Moved the belongings of 75 seniors

Provided long-term, onsite storage for 138 homeless seniors, and short-term storage for 416 seniors.

## Government Benefits

Obtained or retained government benefits (or financial stability) on 3,965 occasions<sup>9</sup>

## Legal

Obtained legal aid for 376 seniors<sup>10</sup>

## Transportation

Distributed, free of charge, 1690 roundtrip bus tickets

Sold 1488 half-priced monthly bus passes<sup>11</sup>

Transported or escorted clients by car to 271 medical appointments, government offices, shopping trips, home, etc

## Life Skills

Clients benefited from 13,500 computer hours (word processing, email, Internet)

Obtained jobs for 15 seniors

Twenty-five seniors planned, planted, maintained and harvested our onsite garden (Horticultural Program)

---

<sup>1</sup> These are unduplicated individuals.

<sup>2</sup> Meals were served to 1,536 unduplicated clients.

<sup>3</sup> 691 clients benefitted.

<sup>4</sup> 660 clients benefitted.

<sup>5</sup> 205 clients benefitted.

<sup>6</sup> Here our efforts were critical to the obtaining or retaining of housing thanks to a direct rent payment, tenant-landlord mediation, or persistent advocacy on behalf of the client. 1,143 unduplicated clients benefited.

<sup>7</sup> The average rent payment made on behalf of each client was \$406.

<sup>8</sup> The average payment to Xcel on behalf of each household was \$481.

<sup>9</sup> It can take an enormous amount of staff time and persistence to obtain government benefits sometimes because the initial application is denied requiring the filing of one or more appeals. Monthly government payments including Aid to the Needy & Disabled, Old Age Pension, Supplemental Security Income, Social Security, Veterans' benefits, food stamps, and one-time payments including LEAP or rent & utility rebates are all included here.

981 unduplicated clients benefited.

<sup>10</sup> This includes investigating open warrants, background check related issues, and working with Colorado Legal Services regarding tenant eviction, replacement ID's, name change issues, etc.

<sup>11</sup> Both Senior Support Services and RTD subsidize our bus pass program. Clients pay half the market rate, or less, for each monthly pass.

## Health

Connected seniors with primary/specialty healthcare, dental, optical, mental health or substance use referrals, prescriptions, or emergency medical care on 1,928 occasions<sup>12</sup>

Weekly visits by outreach worker who had 406 encounters with clients regarding SNAP, Old Age Pension, AND, Medicaid issues, rent or deposit assistance, and other financial matters.

Monthly visits by a nurse who provided inoculations, foot care, health screenings and checkups

Licensed Professional Counselor provided 379 onsite, individual mental health or substance use counseling sessions for 116 seniors

## Socialization

TV Room

Parties to celebrate holidays with a special meal and gifts distributed

Quarterly field trips (picnics, baseball games, etc)

Forty seniors served as members of our Senior Advisory Council

## Demographics of clients

(Each client is at least 55 years of age)

### Physical Condition and Health

80% -- mental health challenges

75% -- alcohol or drug use challenges

70% -- physically frail or disabled

23% -- Veterans

### Housing

59% -- homeless

80% -- homeless or at risk of homelessness

90% -- live alone or are homeless alone

### Gender

73% -- men

27% -- women

.1% -- transgender

### Ethnicity

43% -- African-American

30% -- White (non-Latino)

17% -- Latino

6% -- American Indian

4% -- Asian

### Income Level

79% -- living below the federal poverty level<sup>13</sup>

\$718 per month is the average income of each client

---

<sup>12</sup> 590 unduplicated clients benefited.

<sup>13</sup> The federal Poverty Guidelines are used to determine the federal poverty level here. The 2017 Federal Poverty Guideline for one person is \$1,005 per month.